

**MAJOR PROJECT ASSESSMENT:  
*Illawarra Private Health Precinct  
Concept Plan and SurgiCentre  
Project, Penrose, West Dapto***



Director-General's  
Environmental Assessment Report  
Section 75I of the  
*Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*

January 2010

Cover photo: Illawarra Private Health Precinct Concept Plan stages and perspective of the SurgiCentre

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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La Vie Developments Pty Ltd (La Vie) proposes to establish a private health precinct at Penrose, within the West Dapto release area, Wollongong Local Government Area.

La Vie is seeking concept plan approval for the precinct, to be developed in 8 stages over approximately 15 years. The precinct would include a hospital and specialist medical facilities, along with a retail component, education and accommodation facilities, and housing for seniors.

La Vie is also seeking project approval for stage 1, a specialist surgical centre (the SurgiCentre).

The private health precinct has a capital investment value of \$315.7 million, would employ over 2000 people once fully developed and would have capacity for 632 overnight patients. Stage 1 – the SurgiCentre has a capital investment value of \$38 million and would employ 300 people once operational.

The proposal constitutes a 'major project' under Part 3A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (the EP&A Act), and consequently the Minister is the approval authority for the project.

During the exhibition period the Department received 15 submissions on the proposal, including 9 from public authorities and 6 from nearby residents. These submissions raised a broad range of concerns, mainly relating to the traffic, visual, amenity and noise impacts. 4 local residents objected to the project. Wollongong City Council raised concerns about traffic and access impacts, particularly regarding the design of local road upgrades and timing of these works.

The Department has assessed the merits of the project in accordance with the objects of the EP&A Act.

The Department is satisfied that the project is consistent with the State Plan and the strategic planning objectives for the area, including the future rezoning as part of the West Dapto release area.

The Department's assessment found the key issues relate to traffic and road/intersection upgrades, design and visual impacts and noise (particularly from the Helipad proposed as part of stage 5). These issues have been assessed in detail and the Department is satisfied they can be adequately mitigated and/or managed to ensure acceptable built form outcomes and environmental performance. Consequently, the Department has recommended some modifications to the concept plan and a range of conditions for stage 1 – the SurgiCentre.

In summary, the Department considers the site is suitable for the development, and that the project offers significant, economic and social benefits to the region, as it would:

- attract \$315.7 million in investment;
- create 2,089 jobs; and
- provide substantial general and specialist, medical and aged care services.

Consequently, the Department considers the precinct and stage 1 project application are in the public interest and should be approved, subject to modifications and conditions.



# 1. PROPOSED PROJECT

## 1.1 Project Description

La Vie Developments Pty Ltd (the Proponent) proposes to establish a private health precinct on 10.5 hectares of land in Penrose, West Dapto in the Wollongong Local Government Area (see Figure 1).



Figure 1: Regional Context

The precinct site is a triangular parcel of land adjacent to the residential suburb of Penrose (see Figure 2). The precinct would be developed in 8 stages over approximately 15 years, with a specialist surgical centre, radiology and pathology, hospital, accommodation, education and aged care facilities. The Proponent is also seeking project approval for stage 1 – the specialist surgical centre (the SurgiCentre).



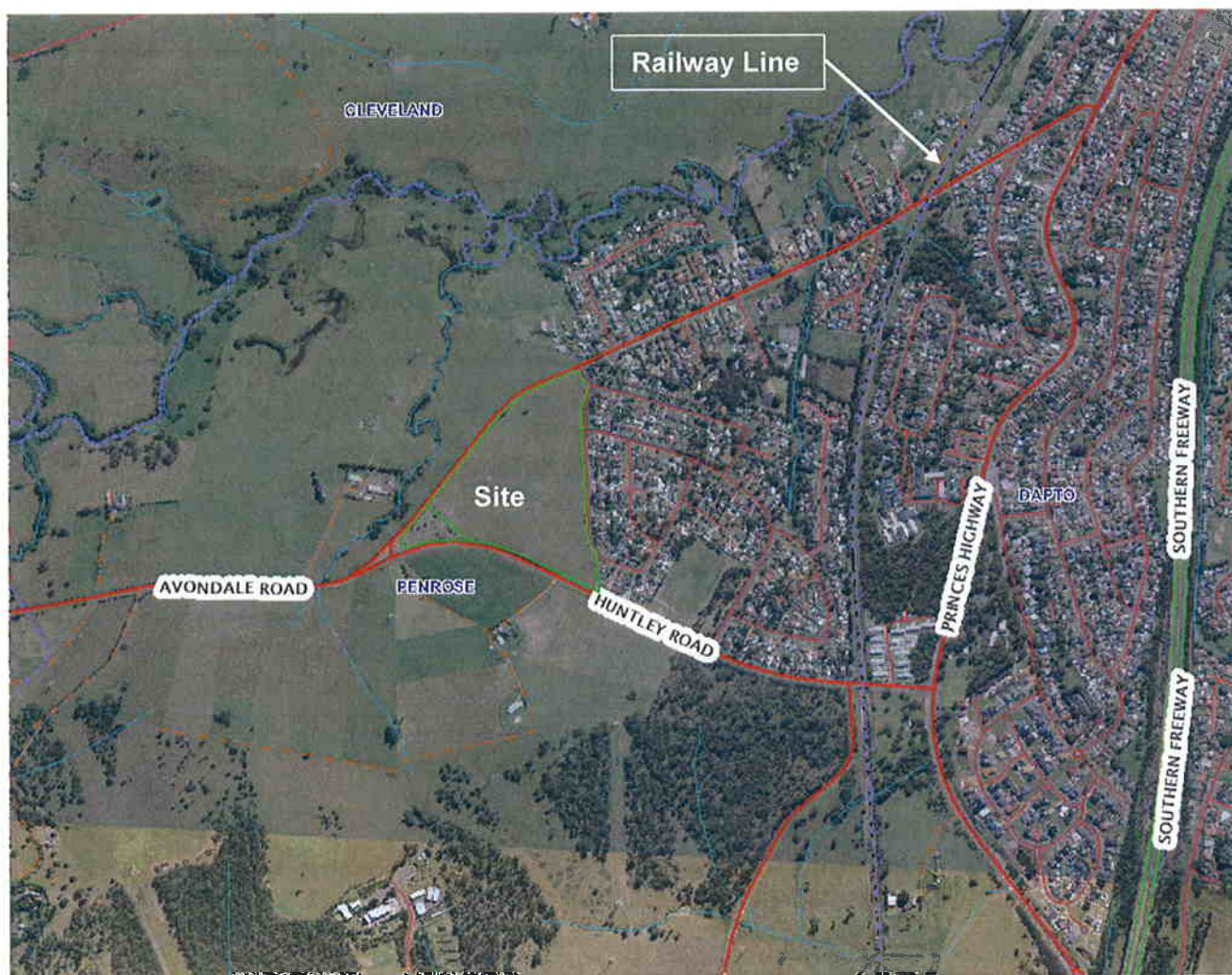


Figure 2: Site (the 2 lots outlined in green) and surrounds

The major components of the concept plan are summarised in Table 1, and depicted in Figure 3, Figure 4 and Figure 5. The project is described in full in the Proponent's Environmental Assessment (EA), which is attached as Appendix F.

Table 1: Major components of the Concept Plan

Aspect	Description
Summary	The establishment of a Private Health Precinct
Subdivision	<b>Subdivision of the site at various stages</b>
Stage 1	<b>Specialist SurgiCentre</b> – including 10 overnight beds, consultation & day surgery facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 storeys (&amp; 2 levels of basement parking)</li> <li>• Gross Floor Area (GFA) 12,000m<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• 284 car parking spaces</li> </ul>
Stage 2	<b>Radiology &amp; Pathology Service</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 storeys (&amp; 2 levels of basement parking)</li> <li>• GFA 4,000m<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• 100 car parking spaces</li> </ul>
Stage 3	<b>Hospital &amp; Medical Centre</b> – including 10 beds, casualty, a medical centre, a pharmacy & shops <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 storeys (&amp; 2 levels of basement parking)</li> <li>• GFA 9,000m<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>

Aspect	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 250 car parking spaces</li> </ul>
Stage 4	<b>Stand Alone Obstetrics Unit</b> – including 20 beds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 storeys (&amp; 2 levels of basement parking)</li> <li>• GFA 3,000m<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• 60 car parking spaces</li> </ul>
Stage 5A, 5B & 5C	<b>Hospital</b> (stage 5A) – including 303 beds; 12 operating theatres; radiotherapy, oncology and nuclear medicine units; a mortuary; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 storeys (&amp; 2 levels of basement parking)</li> <li>• GFA 41,680 m<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• 952 car parking spaces</li> <li>• Highest roof level R.L.73m</li> </ul> <b>Retail Shopping Plaza</b> (stage 5B) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2-3 storeys (&amp; 1 level of basement parking)</li> <li>• GFA 12,690m<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• 60 car parking spaces</li> </ul> <b>Maintenance Building</b> (stage 5C) – Commercial laundry, maintenance & power generation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 storeys</li> <li>• GFA 2,400m<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• 30 car parking spaces</li> </ul>
Stage 6	<b>Staff &amp; Student Accommodation</b> – 50 serviced apartments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 storey (&amp; 1 level of basement parking)</li> <li>• GFA 4,000m<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• 50 parking spaces</li> </ul>
Stage 7	<b>Education Facility</b> – including meeting & conference rooms & 80 serviced apartments for carers, relatives and outpatients <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• up to 5 storeys</li> <li>• GFA 12,540m<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• 110 car spaces</li> </ul>
Stage 8A	<b>Aged &amp; Disability Centre</b> – including youth & dementia care, & a rehabilitation centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• up to 4 storeys</li> <li>• GFA 4,750m<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• 110 car spaces</li> </ul>
Stage 8B	<b>Seniors Accommodation</b> – independent houses for seniors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 storeys (44 x 2 bed units)</li> <li>• GFA 2,940m<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• up to 46 car spaces (garages)</li> </ul>
Total Gross Floor Area	109,000m <sup>2</sup>
Capital Investment Value	\$315.7 million
Jobs	2,089 once operational





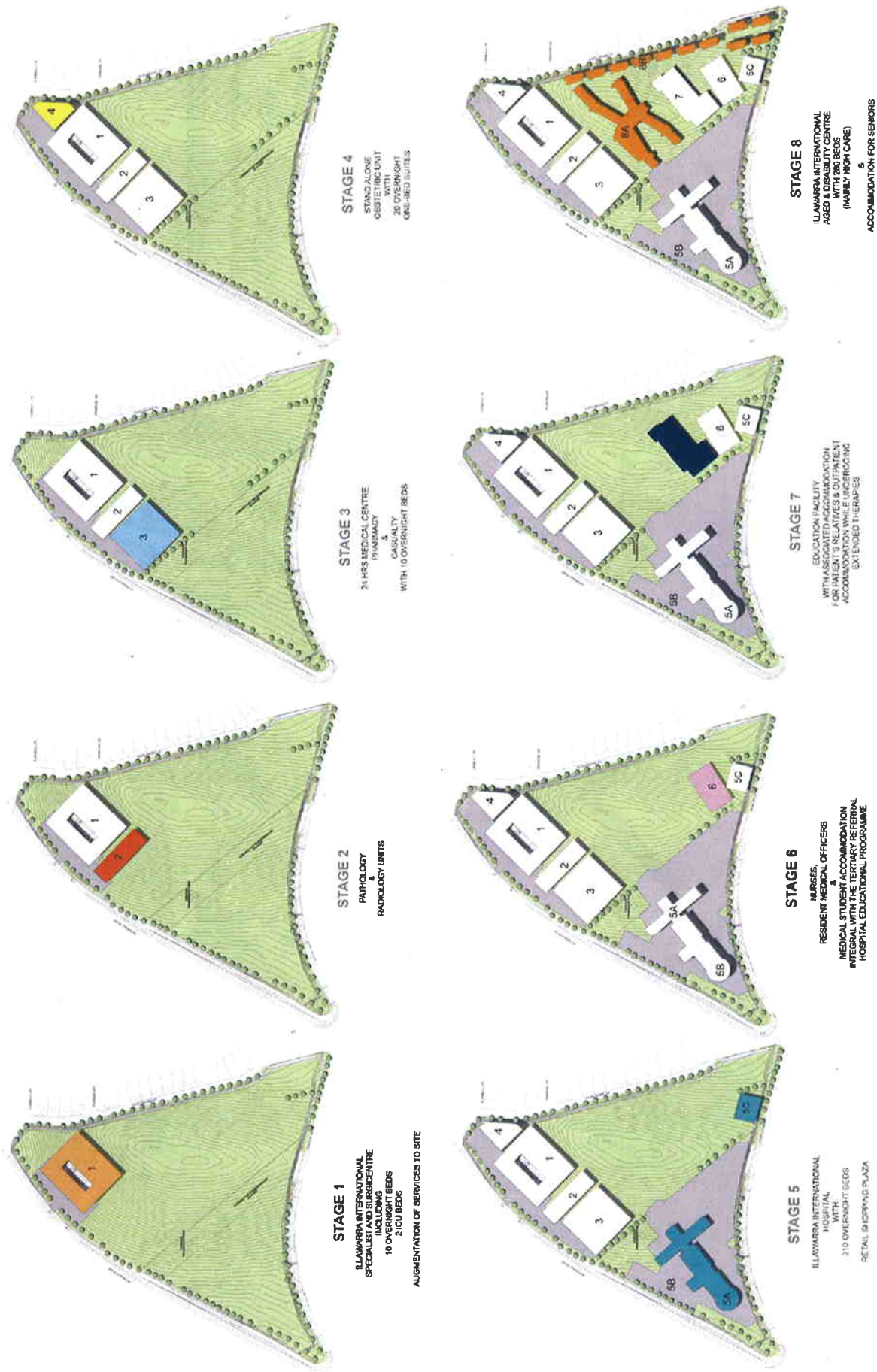


Figure 4: Proposed Staging Plan



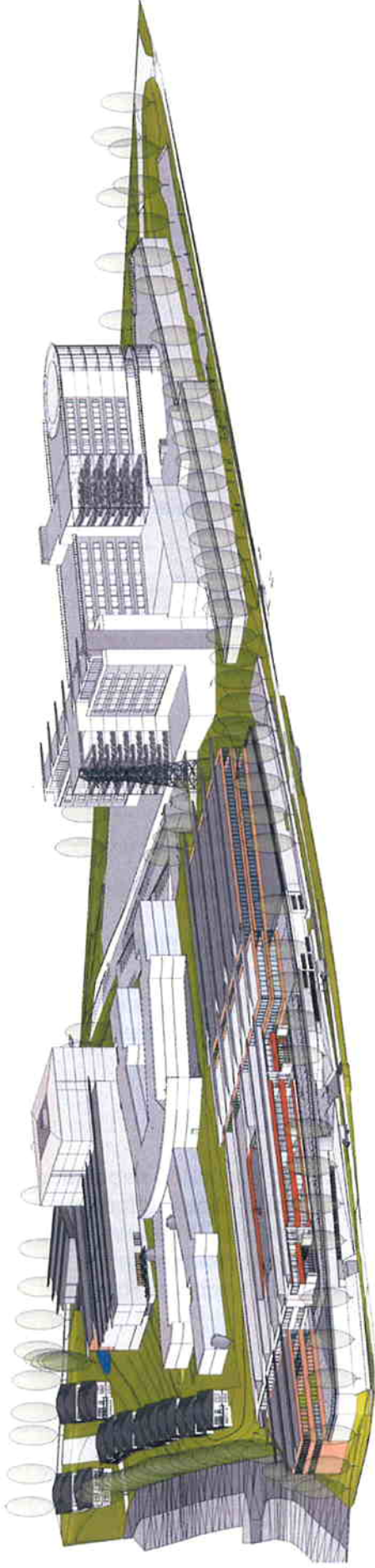


Figure 5: Perspective of the proposed Illawarra Private Health Precinct



The Proponent is seeking Project Approval for stage 1 – the SurgiCentre, which would cater for 92 specialists. The facility would comprise a 2 storey building (with basement car parking) near the corner of Avondale Road and Goolagong Street.

Table 2: Major Components of the SurgiCentre Project (stage 1)

Aspect	Description
Project Summary	The establishment of a SurgiCentre with 2 storeys and 2 levels of basement parking
Subdivision	Subdivision of the stage 1 site area from the rest of the site
Specialist Consultation suites	30 suites – to cater for 92 specialists
Day Surgery	Composed of approximately: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 operating theatres</li> <li>• 9 intensive care/high dependency beds</li> <li>• 21 recovery beds (and 2 cots)</li> <li>• Recovery chairs</li> <li>• 10 overnight hospital beds</li> </ul>
Training Rooms	6 briefing rooms, for lectures and training (eg ambulance certification)
Shops	A pharmacy, a florist and a café
Parking	284 spaces (33 on ground level and 251 in the basement)
Gross Floor Area	12,000m <sup>2</sup>
Associated works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loading Dock</li> <li>• Road widening</li> <li>• Connections to services</li> </ul>
Capital Investment Value	\$38 million
Jobs	300
Hours of operation	24 hours a day, 7 days a week

A Preferred Project Report was submitted for stage 1 - the SurgiCentre, incorporating some minor amendments, namely:

- To create a radioiodine therapy facility, with associated radioiodine effluent detention tanks, pumps and instrumentation;
- To change the location of the liquid oxygen storage and emergency backup facilities (these would now be provided underneath the transmission lines, between stages 3 and 5, with the first tank to be constructed at stage 1);
- Updating some internal layout arrangements; and
- To extend the roof, to cover the walkways around the building.

Following lodgement of the Preferred Project Report, the Proponent continued negotiations with Wollongong City Council and the Department regarding the works required for the upgrade of roads bounding the site. As a result of these negotiations, the Proponent revised the layout plans for stage 1, to show the proposed upgrade works and changes to the location of the buildings, to accommodate future road widening along Avondale Road.



Figure 6: Plan for SurgiCentre





Figure 7: Perspective of SurgiCentre from Avondale Road

## **1.2 Project Setting**

The site was inspected by officers from the Department on 9 November 2009.

The site is a vacant triangular block at Penrose (Lot 4 DP 258024 and Lot 22 DP 607750). It is surrounded by rural grazing land on 3 sides and is adjacent to the Penrose residential area (characterised by 1 to 2 storey detached dwellings), to the east of the site. It is approximately 2.5 km from Dapto town centre and approximately 15 km from Wollongong. Access from Wollongong is via the Southern Freeway and Princes Highway. A railway line also runs between the highway and the site and the 2 access roads to the site, Avondale and Huntley Road, cross the line with a level crossing (with active controls) and bridge respectively. The nearest railway station is at Dapto.

The site is a vacant greenfield site, covered in grasslands with a history of grazing. The majority of the site has a westerly aspect, with a fall of up to 20 m from the highest point on the site, and drains to a small creek and floodplain on the opposite side of Avondale Road. The eastern corner of the site slopes towards the adjoining residential area, to the east.

An easement with 132kV overhead electrical transmission lines (and a gas pipeline) runs through the site.

The site is within the proposed West Dapto release area (stage 4 - Avondale). The West Dapto release area is expected to generate 16,000 dwellings in the next 30 - 40 years. Initially stages 1 and 2 would provide 6,600 new homes, with a rezoning proposal currently being considered by the Department. The site and surrounding area (all of stages 3 and 4) are listed as a deferred matter under the Draft Local Environmental Plan. However, the Draft West Dapto Master Plan indicates the site would eventually form part of the Huntley Village and would be zoned for a neighbourhood centre and residential purposes. The timing for this rezoning will depend on housing demand and uptake of stages 1 and 2. The site is also approximately 1 kilometre from the proposed Huntley Station, which may be developed in 20 to 30 years.

The Illawarra Regional Strategy also identifies the West Dapto release area as the main area for urban expansion opportunities in the region.

## **1.3 Project Need**

One of the priorities of the State Plan is to improve and maintain access to quality healthcare in the face of increasing demand. In particular the State Plan identifies a need for more health infrastructure and access to elective surgery.

The Illawarra Regional Strategy also identifies mental health and health services as priorities for the region.

The need for additional health services is also reflected in a recent Special Commission of Inquiry into Acute Care Services conducted by Commissioner Peter Garling SC. The inquiry found there is significant pressure on the NSW public health system, created by a growing and ageing population, and rising costs and community expectations. In response to these findings the Health Action Plan for NSW identifies working more closely with the private sector as one of the ways to meet this increased demand.

The Proponent has also commissioned an analysis of the potential unmet demand for private hospital services in the region. This analysis found that there is currently a shortfall in both private hospital day services and overnight beds (up to 100 overnight beds). Modelling of future private hospital demand was also undertaken and indicates that demand for private health services would increase in the future.

This is consistent with the findings of the Special Commission of inquiry which found that for many years the number of patients needing admission and other treatment has increased annually and this trend is expected to continue.

The precinct would provide approximately 350 hospital beds once completed, and would also include a mental health unit and aged care facility for 280 people. Consequently, the proposal has the potential to ease demand for public hospital facilities and provide services for the West Dapto release area as it develops.

The Illawarra Regional Strategy also identifies the need for more jobs in the Illawarra. The precinct would generate 2,089 jobs, close to the proposed West Dapto release area and represents a significant capital investment for the region (\$315.7 million), increasing business investment in regional NSW.

## **2. STATUTORY CONTEXT**

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### **2.1 Major Project**

The proposal is classified as a major project under Part 3A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act), because it is development for the purpose of a hospital with a capital investment value of more than \$15 million, and therefore triggers the criteria in Clause 18 of Schedule 1 of *State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Development) 2005*.

On 17 June 2008 the proposal was declared to be a major project under Part 3A of the Act. On 4 September 2008 the then Minister for Planning authorised the submission of a Concept Plan.

Consequently, the Minister for Planning is the approval authority for the project.

### **2.2 Permissibility**

Under the *Wollongong Local Environmental Plan 1990* the site is in Zone No 1 (Non-Urban Zone) and is permissible as a hospital within this zone.

The area has been identified as part of the West Dapto release area, with draft plans indicating the area would be rezoned for a neighbourhood centre and residential area. However, the rezoning of this area has been deferred, in order to prioritise the rezoning of stages 1 and 2 (to the north). Council has indicated that urban development of the area around the site is not expected for some time. This timing will depend on how quickly stages 1 and 2 are developed.

Nonetheless, when the site is rezoned it is likely to be for residential (and neighbourhood centre) purposes and would be permissible with consent as health services facilities under the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007*.

### **2.3 Exhibition and Notification**

Under Section 75(3) of the EP&A Act, the Director-General is required to make the Environmental Assessment (EA) of a project publicly available for at least 30 days.

After accepting the EA for the project, the Department:

- made it publicly available from 8 July 2009 until 7 August 2009:
  - on the Department's website,
  - at the Department's Information Centre, and Wollongong Office, and
  - at Wollongong City Council's Offices and at Dapto District Library;
- notified landowners in the vicinity of the site about the exhibition period by letter;



- notified relevant State government authorities and Wollongong City Council by letter; and
- advertised the exhibition in the Sydney Morning Herald and the Illawarra Mercury.

This satisfies the requirements in Section 75H(3) of the EP&A Act.

During the assessment process the Department also made a number of documents available for download on the Department's website. These documents included the:

- project application;
- Director-General's environmental assessment requirements;
- EA; and
- the Proponent's responses to issues raised in submissions.

## 2.4 Environmental Planning Instruments

Under Section 75I of the EP&A Act, the Director-General's report is to include a copy of or reference to the provisions of any:

- *State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP)* that substantially govern the carrying out of the project; and
- environmental planning instrument that would (but for Part 3A) substantially govern the carrying out of the project and that have been taken into consideration in the environmental assessment of the project.

The Department has considered the project against the relevant provisions of several environmental planning instruments (including SEPPs: *State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Development) 2005*, *State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007*, *State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing for Seniors or People with a Disability) 2004*, *State Environmental Planning Policy No. 33 – Hazardous and Offensive Development*, *State Environmental Planning Policy No. 55 – Remediation of Land*; the *Illawarra Regional Environmental Plan No 1*; and the *Wollongong Local Environmental Plan 1990*).

The Department is satisfied that, subject to the implementation of the recommended conditions of approval, the proposal is generally consistent with the aims and objectives of these instruments (see Appendix C).

## 2.5 Objects of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

The Minister's consideration and determination of the application must be consistent with the relevant provisions of the EP&A Act, including the objects set out in the Act's section 5. They are:

*The objects of this Act are:*

*(a) to encourage:*

- (i) the proper management, development and conservation of natural and artificial resources, including agricultural land, natural areas, forests, minerals, water, cities, towns and villages for the purpose of promoting the social and economic welfare of the community and a better environment,*
- (ii) the promotion and co-ordination of the orderly and economic use and development of land,*
- (iii) the protection, provision and co-ordination of communication and utility services,*
- (iv) the provision of land for public purposes,*
- (v) the provision and co-ordination of community services and facilities, and*
- (vi) the protection of the environment, including the protection and conservation of native animals and plants, including threatened species, populations and ecological communities, and their habitats, and*
- (vii) ecologically sustainable development, and*
- (viii) the provision and maintenance of affordable housing, and*

- (b) to promote the sharing of the responsibility for environmental planning between the different levels of government in the State, and*
- (c) to provide increased opportunity for public involvement and participation in environmental planning and assessment.*

The Department has fully considered the objects of the EP&A Act, including the encouragement of ESD, in its assessment of the application.

The assessment integrates all significant economic and environmental considerations and seeks to avoid any potential serious or irreversible damage to the environment.

The Proponent has also considered a number of alternatives to the proposed project (including the alternative of not proceeding), and considered the project in the light of the principles of ESD.

## **2.6 Statement of Compliance**

Under Section 75I of the EP&A Act, the Director-General's report is required to include a statement relating to compliance with the environmental assessment requirements with respect to the project.

The Department is satisfied that the environmental assessment requirements have been complied with.

## **3. ISSUES RAISED IN SUBMISSIONS**

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During the exhibition period, the Department received a total of 15 submissions on the project:

- 9 from public authorities (the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW), the NSW Office of Water (a part of DECCW), the Roads and Traffic Authority, NSW Transport and Infrastructure, NSW Health, NSW Industry and Investment, Sydney Water, Wollongong City Council and Shellharbour City Council); and
- 6 submissions from the general public (4 objections, 1 raising concerns and 1 in support of the proposal).

A summary of the issues raised in submissions is provided below. A full copy of these submissions is attached in Appendix E.

### **3.1 Public Authorities**

DECCW raised concerns about the potential impacts on Aboriginal cultural heritage; noted that radiation controls would need to be implemented; that groundwater would need to be managed and that there were potential flaws in the traffic noise assessment. DECCW also made recommendations relating to sewerage management and associated odour.

The NSW Office of Water provided comments relating to the management of groundwater and potential need for a waterproof retention system with capacity to handle future fluctuations in the watertable level.

The Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) raised concerns about the suitability of the initial traffic modelling and requested revised modelling to consider the potential impacts of the proposal and identify any infrastructure upgrades required. Subsequent advice on the revised modelling confirmed traffic could be accommodated at the existing intersections for stage 1 and that this would need to be reconsidered in the applications for each subsequent stage of the precinct.

NSW Transport and Infrastructure requested additional information relating to public transport and cycle facilities, pedestrian access and the workplace travel plan.

NSW Health indicated support for the project but raised concerns about some inconsistencies and lack of detail provided in relation to the services proposed and timing of each stage. In particular NSW Health requested further details of the types of illnesses, diseases and conditions likely to be treated so it could assess the impact on regions health services.

NSW Industry and Investment noted the site's proximity to Mullet Creek and Lake Illawarra and that Lake Illawarra supports recreational and commercial fishing. NSW Industry and Investment recommended conditions relating to stormwater management, water quality monitoring and auditing.

Sydney Water noted the proposal would need a trade waste permit or agreement and that the Proponent must fund any required adjustments to Sydney Water infrastructure.

Wollongong City Council (Council) confirmed they consider the location suitable for the development as it would support the development of West Dapto. Nonetheless, Council raised concerns about the potential traffic and access impacts, noting that an effective bus transport system would need to be established; recommended additional noise assessments are undertaken at each project application stage; and requested that the retail component cater for surrounding residents, consistent with the proposed Huntley Village Neighbourhood Centre in the West Dapto Master Plan.

After reviewing revised plans Council advised it is prepared to support the approval of the Concept Plan and stage 1, subject to conditions requiring suitable provision for the interim and final local road design. Council also recommended conditions of approval relating to road design, stormwater, landscaping and health.

Shellharbour City Council noted that issues associated with flight paths for helicopters associated with the Helipad should be considered by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority.

These issues are considered in section 4 of this report.

### **3.2 Community**

5 submissions from the community objected or raised concerns about:

- traffic impacts, especially surrounding the railway level crossing and during flooding of Avondale Road;
- parking impacts on surrounding streets;
- access issues associated with the road infrastructure, number of bus services (and proposed redirection of buses) and reliance on the proposed train station, proposed as part of the West Dapto Master Plan, which may not be built;
- impacts from construction, including during road upgrades and during the installation of services;
- the size and scale of the proposal, especially given the surrounding rural and residential land uses;
- impacts on the amenity of the area;
- impacts on views to the Illawarra Escarpment from existing residences;
- noise impacts from the Helipad and the flight path of helicopters accessing the hospital, especially sleep disturbance;
- lack of services for the existing community (who would not be able to afford to attend a private hospital);



- the site selection/suitability given the issues with access, and services and the proximity to residents, alternative sites/zones where recommended;
- the health risks of the overhead transmission lines;
- risks from biohazard wastes produced;
- the level of community consultation undertaken by the Proponent and the EA misrepresenting the feedback provided by the community during consultation.

These issues are considered in section 4 of this report.

1 submission from the community supported the project due to the employment opportunities it would generate, the need for hospitals to support the growing population and the potential increase in property values.

### **3.3 Response to Submissions**

The Proponent has provided responses to the issues raised in submissions with the Preferred Project Report (see Appendix D). These have been made publicly available on the Department's website.

The Department has considered the issues raised in submissions, and the Proponent's responses to these issues, in its assessment of the project.

## **4. ASSESSMENT**

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### **4.1 Strategic Planning**

The proposed private health precinct would be established over approximately 15 years and would provide a variety of health services, with a substantial capital investment in the region. The proposal would significantly change the site, as it would transform from vacant rural grassland to a large specialist medical and commercial precinct. To establish the suitability of the site for the proposed private health precinct, it has been reviewed against the relevant objectives and strategic planning documents and instruments.

The key strategic planning instruments governing the site include:

- The State Plan;
- The Illawarra Regional Strategy;
- The West Dapto Master Plan; and
- The Draft West Dapto Local Environmental Plan.

#### State Plan

The NSW State Plan is the NSW Government's long term plan for service delivery. It sets out targets for delivery by the public sector and includes Local Action Plans for regions.

The Department has assessed the proposal against the targets set out in the State Plan and considers the proposal is consistent with the following priorities, to:

- maintain and invest in infrastructure;
- increase business investment and support for jobs, especially jobs closer to home;
- improve and maintain access to quality healthcare in the face of increasing demand, with priorities including:
  - health infrastructure; and
  - access to elective surgery.

The proposal is also consistent with the Illawarra Local Action Plan which prioritises:

- support for more jobs in the Illawarra; and
- improved mental health and health services for the community.

The Department is satisfied the proposal is consistent with the objectives of the State Plan and would assist in improving health services in the Illawarra, by providing additional services and reducing the strain on the public health system.

#### Illawarra Regional Strategy

According to the Illawarra Regional Strategy, the region's population is expected to grow by 47,600 people by 2031. In order to accommodate this growth, urban expansion as well as revitalisation and consolidation of existing areas is proposed. Fifty percent of the additional housing required would be provided in the proposed West Dapto release area, with the remainder provided through revitalisation of Wollongong City Centre and increased housing density of other centres and towns.

The proposal is consistent with the growth and urban expansion outlined in the regional strategy as the site is within the West Dapto release area and is also in a suitable position to cater for residents at Calderwood, approximately 10 kilometres to the south west of the site, a possible future release area, currently under consideration by the Department.

15.8% of the Illawarra workforce currently travels outside the region to work and the strategy highlights the need to reduce this. The proposal is consistent with this goal, as it would provide job opportunities in the vicinity of existing and proposed residential areas, providing jobs closer to home. The strategy also identifies the healthcare sector as a major employment generator, which is expected to grow.

The strategy recognises the development of new urban areas will require additional infrastructure and notes that contributions towards state infrastructure may need to be levied, in addition to the S94 contributions used to fund local infrastructure.

The Department is satisfied the proposal is consistent with the Illawarra Regional Strategy as it would be within the proposed urban release area, and would provide jobs closer to home, in a sector identified for growth. Contributions are considered in detail in section 4.3 of this report.

#### West Dapto Master Plan and Draft West Dapto Local Environmental Plan

Wollongong City Council has prepared a Master Plan for the West Dapto release area, setting out the location, proposed land uses and likely staging of various areas to be released over the next 40 years. This master plan identifies the site as a part of stage 4 (the final stage), which is currently planned to form part of the Huntley Village, with a neighbourhood centre and residential zones on the site. The site would be surrounded by medium density and rural residential zones, with the nearby creek identified as a riparian zone to the north west of the site.

The Department is satisfied the proposal is consistent with the West Dapto Master Plan, as it would be compatible with the proposed surrounding residential land uses and is consistent with the proposed neighbourhood and residential zones for the site, providing health and retail services and housing for seniors.

The Draft West Dapto Local Environmental Plan is currently being reviewed by the Department. This instrument would only rezone stages 1 and 2 at this time, so the site and surrounding area would remain a non urban zone, in the short to medium term, until later stages are released. However, as previously noted the site is adjacent to the existing suburb of Penrose to the east, so it would be an extension to the existing urban area.

The Department is therefore satisfied the proposal is consistent with both the current and proposed land uses for the area and that suitable justification for the proposal has been provided.

#### 4.2 Traffic

The site is vacant grassland and the surrounding area is currently used as rural grazing lands, with the residential area of Penrose to the north east of the site. Access is from the Princes Highway, which connects to the site via either Avondale or Huntley Roads. Both these intersections (with the Princes Highway) are currently unsignalised. Both roads cross a railway line, which runs between the site and the Princes Highway; Avondale Road has a Railway Level Crossing with active controls, while Huntley Road crosses the line with a bridge. These 2 access roads are collector roads; however, in the vicinity of the site they are narrow with a single lane in each direction and no kerb or gutter (see Figure 8 and Figure 9).



Figure 8 – Avondale Road looking south west along the site frontage



Figure 9 – Huntley Road looking east along the site frontage

These roads would need substantial upgrades to accommodate the West Dapto release area and the proposal. Council has also advised that the Avondale Road railway level crossing will eventually be closed, with all traffic redirected to Huntley Road. The timing for this has not been decided, however it is expected that it will be undertaken in conjunction with the broader infrastructure upgrades for the West Dapto release area. While road upgrades would be progressively undertaken following the rezoning of stages 3 and 4 of the West Dapto release area, it is likely that most stages of the proposed health precinct would be developed prior to these upgrades occurring. Consequently, the impact of each stage would need to be assessed against the existing road infrastructure at the time of development.

#### Construction

Construction would be staged over an estimated period of 15 years. Submissions from local residents raised concerns about the construction traffic impacts.

The construction traffic impacts would be assessed at each stage of the precinct's development. The Department is satisfied that the impacts from stage 1 could be adequately managed through standard construction traffic management measures. Consequently, the Department has recommended conditions of approval for stage 1 to ensure a construction traffic management plan is prepared and implemented, to manage construction traffic and minimise impacts on other road users and local residents.

Construction traffic impacts from subsequent stages of the precinct will be considered and assessed with each development or project application and the Department has recommended the modified concept plan includes requirements that each subsequent application must consider the traffic impacts from both construction and operation.

#### Operation

The Proponent's Environmental Assessment provided traffic modelling which incorporated the traffic volumes associated with the release of stages 3 and 4 of the West Dapto release



area around the site. This modelling also included assumptions about the road and intersection upgrades that would be provided with this rezoning. The rezoning of stages 3 and 4 of the West Dapto release area has subsequently been deferred and consequently the RTA and Council, in their submissions on the EA, requested revised modelling.

In response, the Proponent undertook revised modelling and assessment of the traffic impacts from the operations of stages 1 to 4. This revised modelling included the assumption that no development associated with the release of West Dapto would have occurred in the area.

Stage 1 would generate up to 688 vehicle trips per day, with up to 20 vehicle trips an hour during the morning peak and 103 vehicle trips an hour during the afternoon peak. Modelling of these volumes at the existing intersections with the Princes Highway demonstrates that both intersections would continue to operate at a high level of service, except for the right hand turns onto the Princes Highway from both Huntley and Avondale Roads, which are already at capacity. In particular, there would be an unacceptable level of service, with a delay of more than 2 minutes, when turning right from Huntley Road.

The assessment found that this delay already occurs, due to the constant traffic flow on the Princes Highway. Modelling of the operations of stages 1 and 2 indicates that very few of the project's vehicles would be making this turn, with an increase of just 10 movements during the evening peak hour. The RTA has confirmed that these intersections would not require upgrades for stage 1.

By the time stage 3 commenced operations approximately 46 vehicles from the precinct would be turning right onto the Princes Highway from Huntley Road, during the evening peak hour. Consequently, when combined with the existing traffic from Penrose, a total of 133 vehicles would be making the right hand turn during the evening peak hour, so the intersection is likely to need traffic lights at stage 3.

The Proponent has agreed to contribute towards the installation of traffic lights at the intersection of Huntley Road and the Princes Highway, at a later stage of the precinct's development, subject to modelling at that time confirming the traffic lights would be required.

Although modelling indicates traffic from stages 1 and 2 could be accommodated at the existing intersections, the RTA recommended that modelling is undertaken with each subsequent application. The Department agrees with this recommendation as it would ensure that any unforeseen changes to the proposal, or the traffic conditions, would be assessed and managed at each stage. Consequently, the Department has incorporated this into the recommended environmental assessment requirements for future applications, as part of the Concept Plan approval.

Traffic impacts from operations of the later stages of the precinct have not been addressed in detail at this time due to the uncertainties regarding the timing of the release of the stage 4 of the West Dapto release area, and the resulting traffic conditions. Nonetheless, the Department is satisfied that this traffic could be managed through future road and intersection upgrades. This would need to be assessed in detail closer to the date of development and would be considered with each individual development or project application.

The local roads immediately around the site would also need to be upgraded: to accommodate turning and passing lanes at the entry and exit points for each stage of the precinct; to ensure the site can be accessed safely; and to ensure the intersection of Huntley and Avondale Roads can be used safely. The Proponent has agreed to undertake local road upgrade works at each stage of the development to provide for road widening, kerb and

guttering and footpaths (on its side of the road). These works would be undertaken on the road adjoining each stage of the project during construction of that stage. This would ensure that once the precinct is complete both the Huntley and Avondale Roads would be upgraded to safely manage traffic around the site.

It is possible that the entire road, along the site frontage, would need to be upgraded to safely accommodate the traffic volumes at an earlier stage (perhaps at stage 3 or 5), and this would need to be assessed with each application.

The proposed interim and final designs of the road upgrades around the site have been reviewed by Council, who has advised that some aspects need to be redesigned. The Department agrees that the road upgrades must be undertaken in accordance with the Australian Standards. The Department notes that Council is the approval authority under the *Roads Act 1993* and consequently, at Council's request, has recommended modifications to the concept plan, to ensure the interim and final road designs are revised, to the satisfaction of the Local Advisory Traffic Committee, prior to the commencement of construction of stage 1.

In order to accommodate the final road upgrades required for the precinct, the road reserve of both Huntley and Avondale Roads would need to be widened on both sides of the road. While the Proponent has agreed to dedicate some of its land to provide for the road upgrades land on the opposite side of the roads would also need to be acquired to accommodate the required road reserve.

Council has indicated any acquisition would be required from stage 3 onwards and consequently, has recommended that the issue of acquisitions be addressed through the assessment of project or development applications for stage 3 and subsequent stages. This has been included in the recommended requirements for future Environmental Assessments in the Concept Plan approval.

For Stage 1 the Proponent is seeking to upgrade a small portion of Avondale Road, with the remainder of Avondale and Huntley road site frontage to be upgraded with later stages of the precinct. Further details of the design and safety of the proposed stage 1 works are required, including details of how the upgraded section of the road would merge back into the existing road. The Department's recommended modifications to the concept plan require a Precinct Development Management Plan to be provided, to demonstrate how the upgraded sections of the road would connect into the existing road, ensuring the existing roads could safely accommodate traffic from the project.

The Department is satisfied that with these additional staging and design plans, traffic from the precinct could be managed through road upgrades, to be undertaken as required throughout the development of the precinct. These upgrades would need to be undertaken in accordance with Australian Standards, to ensure safe road conditions, and to the satisfaction of Council.

#### Parking Supply and Public Transport

The precinct would provide a total of 2146 car parking spaces once completed. Under Wollongong City Council's Development Control Plan the facility would need to include 1773 parking spaces and consequently, the proposed parking provisions exceed the required minimum. Nonetheless, the proposed parking provisions would need to be considered at each stage to ensure there would be sufficient parking during the intermediate stages of the development of the precinct.

Stage 1 would include 284 car parking spaces. Council did not specifically comment on the parking for stage 1, but noted that the overall precinct would have approximately 30% more

parking than required under the Development Control Plan. Council expressed concern that this excess parking would encourage the use of private vehicles rather than public transport.

Traffic and access concerns raised by residents included concerns about the limited number of bus services available and the apparent reliance on the proposed Huntley railway station, as well as concerns about parking on residential streets.

The Department supports the use of public transport, and recognises that parking restrictions could encourage greater use of public transport. Nonetheless, the Department notes the residents' concerns about lack of public transport services, and parking, and consequently has not requested a reduction in parking for stage 1. The Department considers that the parking provision of later stages could be reduced, should access to public transport and parking supply improve.

The Department still encourages greater use and access to public transport, although recognises that the development of Penrose railway station, if it goes ahead, is likely to be many years away. Consequently, in the mean time, the Department considers there may be scope to increase the number of bus services to the area, or to provide a shuttle bus to other public transport services.

In order to encourage staff to use public transport, and to provide access for patients who may be unable to drive home after a procedure, the Department has recommended conditions requiring a sustainable travel plan to be prepared and implemented.

The Department is satisfied that:

- sufficient parking would be available, to prevent parking on residential streets and that should stage 1 have excess parking, the parking for later stages could be reduced; and
- the provision and use of public transport would be encouraged through the sustainable travel plan.

#### **4.3 Infrastructure Requirements and Contributions**

##### Infrastructure

With the development of the West Dapto release area, regional infrastructure would need to be upgraded. This is likely to include improving connections to the Southern Freeway and provision of land for education facilities. The Department is currently preparing a Draft Special Infrastructure Contribution Plan for West Dapto, in order to provide for and manage the delivery of this regional infrastructure.

It is therefore possible that subsequent stages of the precinct would be subject to a Special Infrastructure Contribution, although the contribution rate is yet to be determined. Also, some aspects of the precinct may be exempt from the Special Infrastructure Contribution, depending on the types of land uses which are excluded. As the plan is not available yet, this would need to be considered further with each project or development application. Consequently, the Department has included recommended requirements for future applications that would ensure these issues would be considered and appropriate contributions would be levied on subsequent stages of the project.

As the Special Infrastructure Contributions Plan has not been made yet no regional contributions would be levied on the stage 1 SurgiCentre Project.

##### Local Contributions

The Wollongong Section 94A Development Contributions Plan applies to the site. Under the plan Council may allow exemptions for certain development including private hospitals and

Council has agreed that the hospital components of the facility should be exempt from development contributions.

The proposal also includes a number of other types of development (including retail space, accommodation facilities and seniors living housing) and development contributions would be payable on those aspects of the proposal.

At this stage, based on current cost estimates and Council's existing Development Contributions Plan, Council has indicated that contributions payable for the entire precinct would be approximately \$900,000.

The Department notes that this would be paid over a number of stages and consequently, that the contributions payable would need to be calculated in accordance with the relevant development contributions plan in place, at the time of each future application. The Department has recommended provisions to ensure that subsequent applications for the later stages of the proposal would consider the applicable development contributions plan to determine the relevant contributions payable.

The stage 1 SurgiCentre is for the purposes of a hospital and consequently development contributions would not be levied for stage 1.

#### **4.4 Design and Visual Impacts**

Local residents raised concerns about the size and scale of the buildings and the impacts on the amenity of the area. The proposal would significantly change the site and the character of area, going from a rural landscape to a highly developed hospital precinct and consequently the design and landscaping of the precinct, and impact on views, need to be carefully considered.

##### Design

The topography of the site has influenced the design of the precinct, with the larger buildings positioned on the lower areas of the site to minimise the visual impact of building masses and heights. Passive solar design has been incorporated into the building orientation and site layout, with southern buildings designed to look past the lower northern structures.

Buildings would have a minimum setback of 3 metres from Avondale Road and 6 metres from Goolagong Street.

A layered approach would provide a transition, in both scale and land use, from the relatively low scale residential area in the east to the more intensive hospital building in the west (see Figure 10).





Figure 10 – proposed land use distribution on site (pink residential, blue medical)

This starts with the seniors housing (detached 2 storey dwellings) that would be built across the road from residents on Goolagong St, moving to a higher intensity land use with the 2 storey buildings rising to 3 storeys in the centre of the site. The main hospital has an even higher density and height (approximately 8 storeys or an RL of up to 73m), which would then reduce back to the 2 to 3 storey Huntley Village Plaza with a central fountain at the public entry to the precinct. The incorporation of a plaza/retail component has been designed to encourage integration and interaction with the surrounding residents and wider community, with water features, restaurants and cafes.

The taller hospital building would also screen views of the overhead high voltage electrical transmission lines traversing the centre of the site (see Figure 11). Parking would be constructed in this easement, to maximise the development potential of the site.

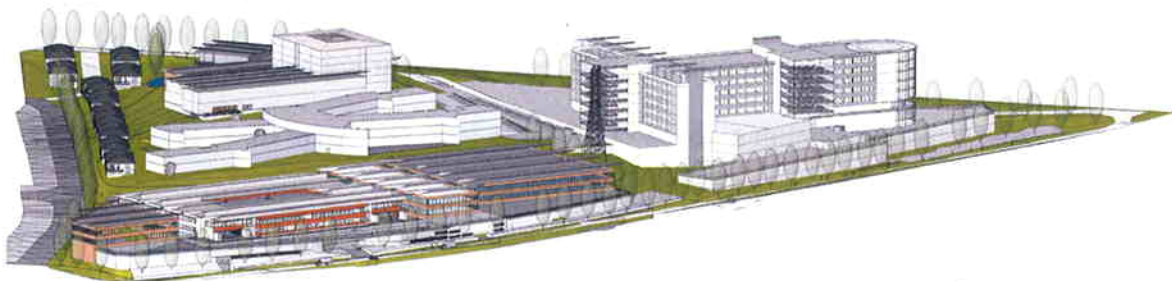


Figure 11 – Site elevations looking south east

The proposed building intensity would be a substantial change from the current rural and low density residential character of the surrounding area. However, as the area is identified for redevelopment as part of the West Dapto release area, the rural character of the site and surrounds is expected to transform to an urban character over time. This transformation may even occur during the development of the later stages of the precinct.

The Department notes the precinct has been designed to integrate with the existing residential area (with the housing components adjacent to the residents) and considers that the height, scale and intensity of development can be managed. Council confirmed the heights are appropriate however noted the site may be affected by a Height Obstacle Limitation Surface in relation to flight paths. The Proponent subsequently consulted with Australian Air Services, who confirmed the proposed heights would not impact on any approach or departure from the Illawarra Airport.

The detailed design, articulation and landscaping would be provided with each project application and the Department is satisfied the visual design impacts of the precinct would be minimised in this detailed design. The Department has incorporated design and landscaping requirements into the recommended modifications to the concept plan.

For stage 1 – the SurgiCentre, the building would have 2 storeys, due to the topography of the site, the 2 levels of basement car parking would be above ground at the entrance from Avondale Road (see Figure 12). The Department notes that the buildings are set back from the car park podium reducing the mass and bulk of the facility. Nonetheless, the Department is concerned about the presentation and appearance of the car park façade, particularly as viewed from Avondale Road.



Figure 12 – Stage 1 - the SurgiCentre view from Avondale Road

The Department considers that, as proposed, the facility would have an imposing presence and that further measures should be included to minimise visual impacts on the existing residents on Turnbull Crescent and Goolagong Street. Consequently, the Department has recommended conditions requiring the detailed design of the facility to be revised to incorporate additional façade treatments and additional landscaping along the site boundary. The Department is satisfied that with additional articulation and façade features, the bulk and scale of the facility would be minimised and that additional landscaping would provide a transition between the rural floodplain and grasslands opposite the site and minimise visual impacts on residents.

### Views

Some houses in the neighbouring residential area of Penrose, have views to the Illawarra Escarpment, looking across the site. These views would be lost or reduced if the precinct is developed. Most of the views are of the top of the escarpment, which is just visible over the top of the hill onsite (see Figure 13), however approximately 8 houses at the northern end of the site have views across the site to the valley below and the escarpment beyond (see Figure 14).



Figure 13 – View from houses on Goolagong Street, looking across the site to the escarpment



Figure 14 – Views of the escarpment looking across the site from houses on Turnbull Crescent and the northern end of Goolagong Street

These views to the south west (of the escarpment) would be blocked by the buildings onsite, see Figure 15.



Figure 15 – photomontage of the precinct with the roofs of houses on Goolagong St in the background

While the loss of these views is significant, the Department notes that the area would eventually be developed as part of the West Dapto release area and consequently the view would change and is likely to be lost with any development of the site (even low-scale development). The proposed building positioning ensures visual impacts would be minimised as the largest building on site (the hospital and retail complex) would be furthest from the residents and in the lower area of the site.

Consequently, the Department considers that the visual impact of the proposal, notwithstanding view reductions, to be acceptable.

#### Landscaping

The preliminary landscaping plan for the precinct provides for street trees around the perimeter of the site, landscaping between various components in the precinct and specific gardens and courtyards designed to complement the various medical treatment facilities on site (see Figure 16).





Figure 16 - Landscaping Plan

The internal gardens would include a dementia garden, psychotherapy garden and community gardens.

The Dementia Garden would form part of the nursing home and would be designed to create a safe, therapeutic and calming space for patients with Alzheimer's disease.

The Psychotherapy Garden would be a safe, enclosed space, designed to provide for the patients needs, while allowing visibility for staff and carers. This garden would include planting areas to allow for patient participation.

Community Gardens would be established throughout the site to encourage interaction, help build a sense of community and provide some fresh fruit and vegetables.

The Department supports the provision of these gardens to assist with patient treatment and encourage a sense of community in the precinct. Nonetheless, the Department considers that landscaping of other areas, which do not have specific health or treatment purposes, should use locally endemic plants. This is consistent with Council's comments and consequently, the Department has recommended modifications to the concept plan, requiring the landscaping plan to be revised, ensuring endemic plants are used in the landscaping of the site (aside from the specific treatment and community gardens).



For stage 1 the landscaping plan provides for some landscaping between Avondale Road and the building (as well as planter boxes along the top of the car park) and for an internal courtyard garden. The Department considers that the height and scale of the building, particularly the car parking, require screening with additional landscaping to minimise the visual impact of the building and soften the transition from the rural landscape on the opposite side of Avondale Road and from the residents on Turnbull Crescent and Goolagong Street.

Consequently, the Department has recommended conditions requiring a detailed landscaping plan to be provided, ensuring additional landscaping is provided along the Avondale Road, Turnbull Crescent and Goolagong Street site frontages. The Department is satisfied this would minimise the visual impact of the building.

#### **4.5 Noise**

The proposal would generate noise during construction and operation and this is expected to increase with the development of each additional stage in the precinct. Residents raised concerns about the potential noise impacts (especially sleep disturbance) from the helicopters using the helipad.

##### Construction noise

The precinct would be developed over the next 10-15 years and construction noise would be generated for much of this period. The development of the precinct is staged so that construction noise impacts would mainly occur in one area at a time. Construction of some of the early stages of the precinct would also provide some shielding from some noise impacts from later stages.

The noise impacts from each stage of construction would need to be considered with each individual project or development application. Consequently, the Department has recommended that the concept plan approval should include requirements to provide a construction noise management plan with each application.

Stage 1 is relatively close to residents at the northern end of the site on Goolagong Street, Turnbull Crescent and Avondale Road and construction noise would need to be managed to minimise impacts on these residents. A construction noise assessment indicates that some construction works would exceed the construction noise goals for the area and that noise goals would be exceeded during excavation, structure and fit out works at the closest residents. The construction noise assessment recommends mitigation measures including:

- the installation of a perimeter barrier fence along the boundary between the site and the closest residents;
- limiting access to the site, to ensure construction traffic does not use Goolagong Street or Turnbull Crescent; and
- positioning of plant away from residents and using shielding.

The Department has incorporated these requirements into the recommended conditions for stage 1. The recommended conditions also require a detailed construction noise management plan to be prepared and implemented. The Department is satisfied this would ensure construction noise would be minimised and managed.

##### Operation noise

Noise would be generated from each stage of the precinct and, cumulatively, has the potential to impact on the amenity of the area. Most of the medical facilities on site would have similar noise sources, from plant for air conditioning or ventilation and from loading docks. The main hospital, to be developed at stage 5, would include a helipad, for patient transport. Noise from the operations of the helipad (and resulting helicopter flight paths), has

the potential to impact on the nearby residential area and, in particular, may cause sleep disturbance.

A preliminary helipad noise impact assessment indicates that noise impacts would occur, with potential sleep disturbance impacts on residents to the south east. To minimise this impact, the noise assessment recommends the use of flight paths to the south should be minimised, with flights coming in from the south west instead.

Helicopter traffic is expected to be infrequent and consequently the Department considers this noise could be managed through flight path restrictions and, if necessary, restrictions on night time helipad operations and/or through the provision of double glazing and insulation at impacted houses. This would need to be carefully assessed when further details of main hospital (stage 5) and the likely demand for helicopter transport are available.

Noise impacts from each stage of the precinct would need to be carefully considered in each project application, consequently the Department has recommended requirements for each subsequent application to include a detailed noise assessment. The Department has also recommended noise limits for the precinct to prevent noise creep and protect the amenity of the adjacent residential area.

Noise monitoring has not been undertaken to determine the background noise levels for the area. Consequently, the Department has based its noise limits on the recommended background levels outlined in the Australian Standards.

The Australian Standards include average noise levels for various land uses and the noise assessment in the Proponent's Environmental Assessment adopted the second lowest noise levels from the Australian Standard (R2 – areas with low density transportation) as the likely background levels for the site.

Officers from the Department visited the site on 9 November 2009 and noted that the site and adjacent residential area has little traffic and no significant noise sources. Consequently, in the absence of noise monitoring data, the Department has adopted the lowest applicable noise levels in the Australian Standard (R1 – areas with negligible transportation).

The Department notes that the noise levels in the area will change as a result of its urban development, and consequently that the sleep disturbance criteria may be unnecessarily conservative once this occurs. This would need to be considered in detail in the Environmental Assessment for Stage 5. The Department has recommended Environmental Assessment requirements for subsequent applications, which require noise from the precinct to be assessed against the relevant noise limits for the precinct. Should background noise levels (from offsite sources not related to the project) increase, the sleep disturbance criteria may be able to be revisited. This would need to be considered with the application for stage 5.

As a relatively small hospital building, the Department considers that the operations of stage 1 would be unlikely to cause significant noise impacts.

The recommended conditions for stage 1 – the SurgiCentre include operational noise limits based on the limits recommended for the concept plan. Noise validation would also be undertaken to ensure that in the unlikely event that a noise exceedance occurred, it would be identified and mitigation measures could be implemented. The Department is satisfied this would prevent the project from generating excessive noise, and that standard noise mitigation measures could be implemented to manage any noise emissions from the site.

### Traffic noise

The traffic noise assessment found that without the proposal, road traffic noise levels are predicted to be exceeded by 2016. The additional road traffic noise from the proposal on top of these levels would be less than 2 dBA and consequently, would be acceptable.

The Department notes that the traffic noise assessment appears to be based on the assumption that stage 4 of the West Dapto release area will have already been developed (with the associated traffic noise levels). This now seems unlikely to occur by 2016. Consequently, as the roads would be quieter than the modelling has assumed, the traffic from the proposal would have a greater contribution than the modelling indicates and has the potential to cause a discernable traffic noise impact or cause an exceedance of the road traffic noise levels. In order to ensure traffic noise impacts are managed, an assessment of traffic noise would be required at each stage of the proposal.

The Department has recommended requirements for road traffic noise to be carefully assessed at each development or project application stage to ensure the traffic noise impacts would be managed.

For stage 1 the project would generate 688 vehicle trips per day, with a maximum of 103 vehicles trips an hour, during the afternoon peak. Consequently, there would be an increase in traffic noise during this period. This increase in traffic noise is not likely to be substantial, is unavoidable and would eventually occur with the development of West Dapto.

In conclusion, the Department has considered the preliminary noise assessment undertaken and is satisfied that for stage 1 noise impacts would be minimised during construction and could be managed within the noise limits, during operations.

Later stages of the precinct would need to be carefully assessed and managed to ensure the cumulative impact of all stages of the precinct would not impact on the amenity of the area. The Department has recommended the inclusion of noise limits in the Concept Plan, to ensure noise levels across the entire site would be managed. The Department has also recommended requirements for future applications to ensure that detailed noise assessments would be provided with the application for each stage of the precinct, to ensure the cumulative noise levels would be assessed and managed. The Department is satisfied that with these modifications to the concept plan, noise from the precinct could be managed to protect the amenity of the surrounding residential area.

## **4.6 Soil and Water**

### Construction

Sediment and erosion would need to be managed on site during construction of the precinct. NSW Industry and Investment noted that this is particularly important given the site is in the Lake Illawarra Catchment which is used for commercial and recreational fishing.

Long-term sediment and erosion controls may also need to be implemented to manage areas that connect to undeveloped portions of the site, during the staged development of the precinct.

For construction of stage 1 the Department has recommended conditions requiring erosion and sediment controls to be implemented in accordance with the relevant guidelines and is satisfied that sediment and erosion could be managed.

The recommended modifications to the concept plan require a Precinct Development Management Plan to be provided to describe how the site would be managed between each stage of the development of the precinct. The plan would include details of earthworks, drainage and sediment and erosion controls. The Department is satisfied that this plan would

provide for the management of soil and water over the whole site, while the precinct is being developed.

Detailed plans of the sediment and erosion controls for construction of each stage of the precinct would need to be provided with each application. The Department has incorporated requirements into the modified Concept Plan to ensure a construction soil and water management plan is provided with each subsequent application.

#### Stormwater

68.9% of the site would be impervious once fully developed and this has the potential to increase stormwater flows from the site. A concept stormwater management strategy has been prepared to manage the quantity and quality of stormwater. The strategy provides for drainage on site and recommends using pipes and gutters with capacity to handle a 1 in 10 year rainfall event. Overland flow paths and drainage routes would be constructed across the site to provide drainage for larger storms, up to the 1 in 100 year event.

The detailed design of this drainage system is not available yet, however preliminary plans are to divide the site into 3 catchments each with its own detention and filtration systems.

Water from each catchment would be treated with gross pollutant traps, and oil/water separators for car parking areas. Bio-filtration basins would also be incorporated into the stormwater management system for stages 5 onwards.

After treatment, stormwater from stages 1 to 4 of the precinct would drain to an Onsite Detention Tank, to be built beneath the car park for stage 1. This tank would have a capacity of 1,560m<sup>3</sup> and modelling shows this would be sufficient to limit flows from the site to predevelopment levels, during a 1 in 100 year rainfall event.

Additional detention tanks would be installed at stage 5 and stage 6 to manage increased runoff from the later stages of the precinct and have also been designed to handle the 1 in 100 year rainfall event.

The Department is satisfied this strategy would provide for the management of stormwater flows on site and ensure post development flows would not exceed predevelopment flows.

Detailed plans and modelling of the stormwater infrastructure is yet to be designed. The Department considers that this detail should be provided with the subsequent applications for each stage of the precinct, when further detail of the design of the facilities is available. The Department has recommended requirements to provide details of the stormwater infrastructure into the applications for subsequent stages, in the recommended modifications to the concept plan.

Council has requested a stormwater master plan and detailed designs for all stormwater infrastructure to be provided at stage 1. Council has also provided specifications and minimum requirements for some of this infrastructure. The Department agrees that the detailed stormwater infrastructure should be designed to connect with Council's system. Consequently, the Department has recommended conditions requiring a detailed stormwater management plan to be prepared and implemented to Council's satisfaction. The Department has also incorporated Council's key requirements into the recommended conditions to ensure these are incorporated into the plan.

The Department is satisfied stormwater would be suitably treated and managed on site, and that stormwater discharges from the site would be within the predevelopment flow rates.



### Flooding

The area to the north west of the site is flood prone land and Avondale Road is sometimes impacted by flooding. The precinct site is not flood prone and could be accessed from Huntley Road, should Avondale Road become flooded. The Department is satisfied flooding would not significantly impact on the operations of the facility.

As post development flows would not exceed predevelopment flows, the Department is also satisfied the proposal would not cause any additional flooding impacts.

### Groundwater

Groundwater is unlikely to be intercepted during excavation of the site; however the Environmental Assessment recommends undertaking additional groundwater investigations to confirm groundwater would not be intercepted. The Office of Water (a part of DECCW) has also requested these investigations are undertaken. This would be used to determine whether groundwater would occur in any excavations undertaken, ensuring the buildings could be designed to manage groundwater and prevent the need for permanent or semipermanent pumping.

The Department agrees that pumping of groundwater (for building protection) should be avoided, as other solutions are available. Consequently, the Department has recommended modifications to the concept plan to ensure additional investigations are undertaken to determine whether groundwater would be intercepted and to ensure buildings would be designed to manage the groundwater, without permanent pumping operations.

### Wastewater

The precinct would generate wastewater from each stage to be developed. Some stages of precinct would include wastewater classed as trade waste, due to the presence of x-ray chemicals and other medical related contaminants. All wastewater, including trade waste from the precinct would be discharged to Sydney Water's sewer system.

Sydney Water did not raise concerns about the proposal and advised that the Proponent would be required to obtain a trade waste permit or trade waste agreement with Sydney Water.

DECCW raised concerns about the capacity of the sewer infrastructure and recommended requirements for any new reticulation system. DECCW also advised that an odour assessment should be provided for any new or existing pumping stations associated with the project.

Sydney Water's advice to the Proponent indicates that the first stages of the precinct can be accommodated by the existing sewer, but that a private pumped service to the sewer would be required.

The detailed design and capacity of the infrastructure required would be determined as part of the trade waste permit or agreement with Sydney Water.

DECCW also noted that any thyroid treatment with I-131 (radioiodine) may require sewer delay tanks and that advice should be sought from Sydney Water. The Preferred Project Report confirmed that radioiodine therapy would be included in stage 1 – the SurgiCentre and that stage 1 would include 2 radioiodine effluent detention tanks as well as pumps and instrumentation. This would allow the radioiodine to physically decay in the holding tanks, prior to discharge to sewer. Nonetheless, in order to ensure this is suitably managed, the Department has recommended conditions for stage 1 requiring this system to be designed and operated to the satisfaction of Sydney Water.

The Department is satisfied that wastewater would be managed through a trade waste permit or agreement with Sydney Water.

In relation to odour, the Department recognises that a pumping station could generate offensive odour, however considers that odour could be managed with standard controls and ongoing maintenance. Consequently, the Department has recommended conditions prohibiting the emission of offensive odour. This should ensure that any pumping station would be designed to prevent the emission of offensive odour, and would be required to be upgraded should offensive odour emissions occur.

#### Contamination

A contaminated site assessment was undertaken, indicating contamination was unlikely to occur on the site, with soil testing of the site indicating contamination is unlikely to occur. Consequently, the Department has not recommended any conditions relating to contamination.

### **4.7 Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

The precinct would generate greenhouse gas emissions during the construction and operation of each stage. An assessment of the likely emissions has been undertaken for construction and operation. This assessment predicts that construction of stage 1 would generate the equivalent of 1,289 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. Construction of the entire precinct is predicted to generate the equivalent of up to 100,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. Once fully developed the precinct is expected to generate the equivalent of 75,916 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> a year, or 55,732 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> a year for scope 1 and 2 emissions (the direct emissions from onsite activities and use of power).

Consequently, as the precinct would emit more than 25,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent a year, it would be required to report its greenhouse gas emissions under the *National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007*. This highlights the substantial level of greenhouse gas emissions that would be generated. The Department considers that as a new facility there is extra scope to improve the energy efficiency of the facility. This would need to be considered in detail prior to construction, to ensure the buildings would achieve best practice in regards to passive solar design and ventilation, and would be designed to accommodate any suitable infrastructure, such as co or tri-generation systems and photovoltaic cells.

The Department has recommended conditions requiring the preparation of a water and energy efficiency program to identify and implement options to maximise the water and energy efficiencies and ensure the project achieves best practice.

The Department is satisfied that these measures would ensure the precinct is appropriately designed and operated to minimise its energy requirements and to incorporate infrastructure to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

### **4.8 Aboriginal Cultural Heritage**

An assessment of the potential for Aboriginal artefacts and sites of cultural significance to occur on the site has been undertaken in consultation with the local Aboriginal groups. This assessment found that no Aboriginal archaeological sites have been recorded on site, while 46 sites have been recorded in the region.

A targeted survey of the site was undertaken with representatives from the Illawarra Local Aboriginal Land Council and no Aboriginal archaeological sites were identified. DECCW raised concerns about the adequacy of the consultation process undertaken and a second Aboriginal group, the Kullila Welfare and Housing Aboriginal Corporation was subsequently identified and consulted.

Neither group object to the proposal however the Illawarra Aboriginal Land Council have recommended that Aboriginal site monitoring should be undertaken during any excavation works. The Kullila Welfare and Housing Aboriginal Corporation supported this request, noting that there was a possibility of finding artefacts. Consequently, the Department has recommended modifications to the concept plan to include an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan to ensure Aboriginal groups are given the opportunity to monitor site earthworks.

The Department is satisfied that artefacts are unlikely to be present on site. Nonetheless, the recommended modifications to the concept plan would ensure that Aboriginal groups would be given the opportunity to monitor excavation works, so that if an artefact was identified it would be appropriately managed.

#### **4.9 Waste**

The precinct would generate waste during construction and operation, and this would need to be minimised and managed. The Environmental Assessment includes details of the waste streams likely to be generated and the waste collection services. Waste would be sent to a suitably licensed waste processing facility for treatment and/or disposal.

The Department notes that stage 5 includes a nuclear medicine unit and the management of waste from this facility would need to be considered in detail in the application for this stage. (Wastewater is discussed in section 4.6 above.)

The Department has incorporated requirements, in the recommended modifications to the concept plan, to ensure that a future application for the nuclear medicine unit would provide for the management of this waste.

The Department is satisfied that other waste can be managed and would be disposed of at a suitably licensed waste management facility. The Department has recommended conditions requiring waste to be minimised and managed during construction and operation.

#### **4.10 Hazards**

As with any hospital, some hazardous materials would be stored on site. The precinct would also include a nuclear medicine unit as part of stage 5. While no details of the proposed unit are available in this application, DECCW has advised that radiation controls would need to be implemented.

The Department considers that treatment methods are likely to develop into the future and that this would influence the type of materials used and the method for management. Consequently, the Department considers that this issue would need to be assessed at the time of development of the relevant stage. The Department has therefore recommended specific requirements are included in the modifications to the concept plan to ensure the application for stage 5 would provide for the management of radioactive material in accordance with the requirements of relevant authorities including DECCW.

Quantities of other hazardous materials are not expected to exceed the thresholds for the storage of hazardous materials and the Department is satisfied that hazards would be managed onsite.

Stage 1 – the SurgiCentre would include a radioiodine therapy facility. DECCW advised that radiation apparatus must be registered and operators must be licensed. To ensure this occurs the Department has recommended conditions requiring radiation apparatus to be registered and certified and to be operated by licensed operators. The Department is satisfied this would ensure that hazards from radiation equipment would be managed.

#### **4.11 Flora and Fauna**

The site is disturbed and appears to have been used for grazing historically. It is dominated by exotic grasses with a few native remnant and regrowth trees (*Melaleuca stypheliodes* and *Casuarina glauca*), shrubs (*Lantana camara*, *Acacia mearnsii*, *Ligustrum sinense* and *Solanum mauritanum*) and grasses (including *Carex longebrachiata* and *Juncus usitatus*).

The site has limited habitat suitable for native fauna, with no hollow bearing trees and is surrounded by similar pastures to the North, West and South. The flora and fauna survey identified a horse and a number of common birds onsite. Threatened species are not expected to occur on the site and DECCW did not raise any concerns regarding flora and fauna.

As the site is disturbed, with a history of grazing, the Department is satisfied that impacts on flora and fauna would be minimal.

#### **4.12 Transmission Lines**

Residents raised concerns about the potential health impacts of the 132 kV overhead electricity transmission lines which run through the site. The buildings would be outside the transmission line easement and would be at least 15 metres from the transmission wires, the Proponent has advised that radiation levels at this distance would be 8 microtesla, well below the recommended safe level of exposure (100 microtesla).

The transmission lines also could be a risk to helicopters using the helipad. The Proponent has confirmed that the helipad would be over 130 m from the transmission lines, and only 10.6 m below the transmission tower and that this satisfies the Civil Aviation Authority and NSW Health guidelines for helicopter landing sites/medical helipads.

The Department is satisfied risks from the 132 kV overhead electricity transmission lines would be managed through building/helipad setbacks from the transmission line easement.

### **5. RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS**

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The Department has prepared recommended modifications to the Concept Plan (see Appendix A) and conditions of approval for the stage 1 Project Application (see Appendix B). These modifications and conditions are required to:

- ensure the site is appropriately managed for the proposed use;
- encourage ecologically sustainable development;
- adequately mitigate the environmental impacts of the project;
- protect the amenity of the local area; and
- protect the public interest.

The Department has provided the draft conditions of approval for the project to relevant government authorities for comment, and has incorporated these comments into the conditions of approval where appropriate.

### **6. CONCLUSION**

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The Department has assessed the merits of the proposal in accordance with the requirements in the EP&A Act.

This assessment found that the environmental impacts of the precinct can be mitigated and/or managed to ensure an acceptable level of performance.





The traffic from each stage of the facility would need to be assessed with each application, to ensure the access roads and intersections can safely accommodate each facility and that any road upgrades are appropriately designed and constructed.

Each building would need to be carefully designed to minimise impacts on the amenity of the surrounding residential and rural areas, maximising landscaping to soften the transition between land uses.

Noise from the Helipad, to be developed at stage 5, would need to be carefully assessed and managed, to minimise impacts on residents. Helicopter flight paths and helipad operations during the night time period may need to be minimised or restricted to prevent sleep disturbance impacts.

Nonetheless, the proposal offers significant, economic and social benefits to the region, attracting \$315.7 million in investment, creating 2,000 jobs and providing substantial medical and aged care services. The proposal is also in close proximity to identified growth areas and consequently in a position to provide jobs closer to home, and to provide health care services for the West Dapto release area and broader Illawarra Region.

Consequently, the Department believes the Concept Plan application for precinct, and stage 1 – the SurgiCentre, should be approved, subject to the recommended modifications and conditions.

## 7. RECOMMENDATION

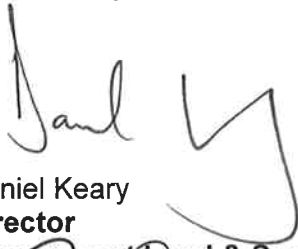
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It is RECOMMENDED that the Minister:

- consider the findings and recommendations of this report;
- approve the concept plan, subject to modifications, under section 75O of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*;
- approve the project application, subject to conditions, under section 75J of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*;
- sign the attached concept plan approval (see Appendix A); and
- sign the attached project approval (see Appendix B).

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 13.1.10  
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 15/1/10  
Richard Pearson  
**Deputy Director-General**

